

COCHRAN'S COMMENT

THE NEWSPAPER BUSINESS.—

A recent issue of the San Francisco Call tells of a visit of Hopewell L. Rogers to California in the interest of the American Newspaper Publishers' association and the white paper situation. Rogers said newspapers in all parts of the country were leading a hand-to-mouth existence; that the white paper supply is so limited that many publishers come to their office each day without knowing whether they will have enough paper on hand to issue an edition the next day. He said eastern publishers are searching everywhere for new paper sources, but so far had accomplished little.

Rogers is business manager of the Chicago Daily News, the owner of which can do quite as much to solve the problem as any publisher in the country. Lawson is the big man in the Chicago publishers' association and by taking the lead could put all Chicago dailies on a 2-cent basis; and at the same time cut down much paper waste by cutting out the many useless editions of the afternoon papers. These frequent editions are printed to increase circulation and thus justify higher advertising rates. The truth is, however, that much of this "extra" circulation is valueless to the advertisers, because the advertisements in the early and late editions are seldom read. Besides, there is duplication; one person often buying more than one edition a day of his favorite paper, and only for the news.

The waste of white paper by Chicago papers is still enormous, notwithstanding the economies they are practicing. The papers hurriedly read and then left on surface, "L" and suburban trains run up into big money. In large quantities this waste paper will bring from dealers one cent a pound, yet publishers sell

the paper at wholesale to newsboys and carrier at six-tenths of a cent per copy, and at the new rate to publishers costs 3.1 cents a pound at the mill or $3\frac{1}{4}$ cents per pound with freight added. Two copies of a 30-page issue of the Daily News weigh a pound.

It's all right for the publishers to look for new sources of supply, but if they will eliminate all waste and quit selling white paper below cost they can get along with the supply they have. It is big dailies like the News, and the big Sunday issues like the Tribune and Examiner, with the awful waste of white paper, that are starving the little fellows to death. And the mad competition to get circulation so as to get advertising is responsible for it. I know of nothing that would do more to solve the problem than for the Chicago dailies to go to 2 cents. The movement would then spread all over the country.

Another way to help would be for the papers to quit selling "position" space—that is contracting to print advertisements wholly or partially surrounded by reading matter. That policy makes for more pages. If they would stick to "run-of-paper" contracts and mass their ads, the big dailies would save many tons of white paper and bring demand down closer to supply. Lots of the slobber that isn't news gets into newspapers only to fill the space around ads. The News and Tribune are the best examples in Chicago of the massing of ads. The worst offenders, quite naturally, are the weaker papers which have to grant concessions to advertisers in order to get business.

—o—o—o—

— DID YOU KNOW —

It is advisable not to have a piano around where there is a baby who has the habit of putting things in its mouth?

And a dogfish won't run after a catboat?